

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 NEA-10 ISO-00 IO-13 EURE-00 SSO-00

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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4011

INFO AMEMBASSY NAIROBI IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY KIGALI

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 11698

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS:PFOR, UK, UG

SUBJECT: BRITAIN TO BREAK RELATIONS WITH UGANDA

REF: LONDON 10968

SUMMARY: HMG WILL ANNOUNCE JULY 28 ITS DECISION TO
BREAK RELATIONS WITH UGANDA. END SUMMARY

1. THE FOREIGN OFFICE INFORMED US PRIVATELY TODAY
(JULY 27) THAT HMG WILL BREAK RELATIONS WITH UGANDA ON
JULY 28. FOREIGN SECRETARY CROSLAND PLANS TO ANNOUNCE THE
DECISION IN PARLIAMENT. SIMULTANEOUSLY, ACTING UK HIGH
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COMMISSIONER GIBBS, IN THE COMPANY OF THE FRENCH AM-

BASSADOR, WILL CALL ON AMIN AND INFORM THE UGANDAN PRESIDENT OF BRITAIN'S INTENTION.

2. HMG HAS HAD A BREAK IN MIND FOR THE LAST TWO WEEKS, EVER SINCE THE MURDER OF MRS. BLOCH IN THE AFTERMATH OF ISRAEL'S RAID ON ENTEBBE AIRPORT. A FINAL DECISION HAD BEEN DELAYED, HOWEVER, WHILE THE FCO LAID THE NECESSARY GROUNDWORK. FIRST, THE FOREIGN OFFICE ATTEMPTED TO PERSUADE THE RESIDENT BRITISH COMMUNITY TO LEAVE UGANDA AS EXPEDITIOUSLY AS POSSIBLE. OVER THE LAST FORTNIGHT AT LEAST TWO HUNDRED FIFTY NATIONALS HAVE DEPARTED. THE REMAINING 200-300 ARE CONSIDERED HARD CORE AND INTENT ON REMAINING IN UGANDA REGARDLESS OF THE CONSEQUENCES. SECOND, THE BRITISH SOUGHT TO ENLIST FRENCH ASSISTANCE WHICH BECAME AVAILABLE ONLY AFTER AMIN HAD RELEASED THE FRENCH AIRPLANE. (THE FOREIGN OFFICE HAS HIGH PRAISE FOR FRENCH COOPERATION DURING THESE DELICATE LAST FEW DAYS. THE FRENCH AMBASSADOR HAS NOT LET HIS BRITISH COLLEAGUE OUT OF HIS SIGHT. FRANCE WILL REPRESENT UK INTERESTS IN UGANDA WITH TWO ATTACHED BRITISH OFFICERS REMAINING IN KAMPALA.) FINALLY, IN LONDON, AMIDST GROWING PUBLIC AND PARLIAMENTARY PRESSURE THAT BRITAIN DISPLAY SOME VIGOR IN ITS HANDLING OF AMIN (REFTEL), THERE CAME A SLOW REALIZATION IN WHITEHALL THAT THE CONTINUED OFFICIAL BRITISH PRESENCE IN UGANDA IN FACT JEOPARDIZED THE BRITISH COMMUNITY IT MEANT TO PROTECT. THE SMALL HIGH COMMISSION IN KAMPALA SEEMED A BIG TOE ON WHICH AMIN WAS ALWAYS PREPARED TO STOMP. AND RECENT INTELLIGENCE REPORTS THAT AMIN MIGHT ARREST GIBBS SEALED THE FCO DECISION.

3. COMMENT: HMG RECOGNIZES THAT ITS DECISION TO BREAK RELATIONS WITH UGANDA MIGHT INVITE SOME FORM OF RETALIATION AND THAT AN ENRAGED AMIN COULD VENT HIS ANIMOSITIES ON THOSE UK CITIZENS REMAINING IN UGANDA. BUT OFFICIALS AT THE FOREIGN OFFICE BELIEVE THE DECISION IS LONG OVERDUE AND HAVE OFTEN EXPRESSED ENVY OF THE EARLIER AMERICAN WITHDRAWAL. BELIEVING THAT THE TIME FOR A BREAK IS NOW OR NEVER, THE FOREIGN OFFICE IS CROSSING ITS FINGERS AND PROCEEDING WITH THE ANNOUNCEMENT.

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